

THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR BEN

"The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful and has no one to thank."

G. K. Chesterton

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What would Thanksgiving be without God? Would it even be? I think G. K. Chesterton hits the nail on the head. What does the atheist do on Thanksgiving? Does he sit around the table and offer a word of thanks for something in his life? But why would he do that? Wouldn't they simply be hollow words? Thanksgiving's proper fulfillment is speech to God in prayer and praise. To give thanks calls us to acknowledge that we're not in complete control of our lives. We acknowledge something bigger is at work, some being that actually takes caring interest in our lives. What does the atheist have to give thanks to? He has only the cold natural process that has developed him, yet it cares nothing for him. It is merely an impersonal process. It's definitely nothing to give thanks too. On Thanksgiving, the atheist can only offer hollow words.

Chesterton's insight especially hit me when I read the book *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins. Dawkins is a staunch atheist who has little good to say about God or Christians. He and his other atheist friends are not especially numerous. In recent surveys, over 90% of Americans believe in God or in the concept of a god. This definitely troubles him and plainly annoys him.

One large problem that atheists have against Christians and their belief in God is that so many Christians fail to live better lives than atheists. And here's the main point of this letter. While we may be frustrated by the philosophical atheists, how frustrated are we with *practical atheists* in the church? Philosophical atheists argue against the existence of God with rational argument, practical atheists argue against the existence of God when they care little for obeying the God they profess.

In getting back to Thanksgiving, the Christian life starts in encountering Christ and his salvation, and it continues in faithful obedience. Living obedient lives is our *true* word of thanks to the God who's saved us, guided us, and continues to uphold us. If we fail to live out our Christian lives in obedience, our words of thanks around the table are as hollow as the atheists. The true word of thanks is displayed in our lives. As another philosopher once wrote, "Unbelief is not the only way of suppressing the truth about God. It is only the most honest."

This Thanksgiving, let us give hearty thanks. Let us experience the joy of thanking our living God in prayer and praise. Yet let us not merely give thanks with words, but with lives that display the truth of God.

I am truly grateful to God for the work he is doing here. God has blessed us with a wonderful church family, from young to old, all blessed with unique gifts that are being used for his glory. Let us praise him for his gifts and let us use them to bring glory to his name and to bring his name to the world.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Pastor Ben

WHAT'S NEW IN THE LIBRARY?

Treason and Hostage by *Don Brown* are the first two books in a new "Navy Justice Series" (that's sure to appeal to those of you who enjoyed watching the popular "JAG" show on TV awhile back). Zack Brewer, a young JAG Officer and a committed Christian, must prosecute a group of Islamic clerics who have infiltrated the Navy Chaplain Corps, inciting sailors and marines to acts of terrorism. He wins that case, but the radical organization behind the chaplains has a long memory and a thirst for revenge. A kidnapping . . . an ultimatum . . . and suddenly, Zack faces an impossible choice that can prevent the next war, but will cost him the life of the person he loves most.

Take One and Take Two by *Karen Kingsbury* - This new series, "Above the Line", features two former missionaries who travel to Hollywood to attempt filmmaking with a Christian message. You can imagine the challenges thrown their way by the Enemy, and how they deal with these



makes for fascinating reading, ala Kingsbury!

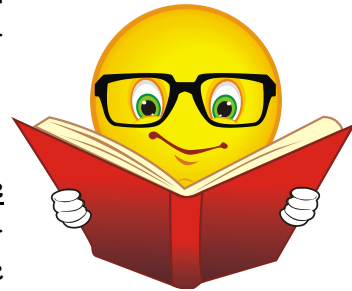
Breaking the Worry Habit . . . Forever by *Elizabeth George* - Do you worry? Over big things? Over little things? Is worry robbing you of peace and joy? Join Ms.

George as she tackles the problem head-on, drawing on God's Word and personal experience to reveal the keys to overcoming worry once and for all. No matter what your particular worry area is, you will probably find it addressed in these pages.

The Year of Living Like Jesus by *Ed Dobson* - Perhaps some of you were able to attend the recent Kalamazoo Deacons Conference celebration service and hear Pastor Ed Dobson of Grand Rapids present his new book. Rev. Dobson devoted a year to emulating Jesus' life (observing Jewish holy days, keeping Kosher, etc.) and discovering what Jesus would really do. The resulting book is an inspiring, insightful and unexpected read. (some of you may remember viewing a DVD in church several years ago, in which Dobson shared some of

the insights he's discovered while battling the degenerative disease ALS). That DVD is available in our library as well.

For young children: What Is Thanksgiving? - A colorful, chunky board book to familiarize your little ones with the wonderful traditions associated with Thanksgiving, while focusing on the real purpose of the "holiday" - giving thanks to the One who provides it all.



Let me remind you of another wonderful Thanksgiving book for the entire family, Thanksgiving

- A Time to Remember. A book review follows, which has previously appeared in the *Communicator*, but is worth running again.

Come in and visit our church library today - you will find a great selection of books to choose from. There are also CD's, DVD's, VHS TAPES, MAGAZINES, SERMONS ON CD's - so many things to look at and borrow! See you soon!



This book review ran in last November's *Communicator*, but since only one family had the opportunity to use the book last Thanksgiving, I wanted to remind others of it this year.

Thanksgiving – A Time to Remember by Barbara Rainey

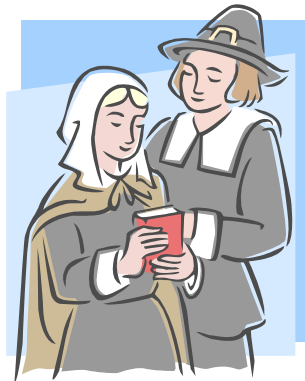
I wish we had enough copies of this book for each family in our congregation to check out and read and share together this month! Not only is it a visually beautiful book with many pictures evoking images of harvest, home and family as well as historic moments in American history . . . not only does it contain a lovely instrumental CD of Thanksgiving music that will call your heart to gratitude as you listen to familiar hymns & choruses of worship, praise and thanksgiving. . .

But the true story contained in these pages will help every family member be aware of the tremendous faith and courage of the early pilgrims, the terrible hardships they faced, and the sovereignty and

providential direction of God that allowed their colony to survive and eventually flourish, against all odds. Even those of us who know their story pretty well by now will be amazed anew at the enormous sacrifices these men, women and children made in faith, to secure freedom for us all. The last chapter contains some very interesting and timely suggestions of simple family activities that could become beloved Thanksgiving traditions in your family.

Another user-friendly feature of this book is that it is printed in two different sizes of type. You can read the larger-type sections to the younger children and still capture the essence of the Pilgrim story, while the smaller print goes into more detail and would be of interest to older children and adults.

The story concludes with words from the journal of William Bradford, second Governor of the Plymouth Colony: *"We have noted these things so that you might see their worth and not negligently lose what your fathers have obtained with so much hardship"*. It is so important in this age of taking so much for granted that we and our children, who are the beneficiaries of those early sacrifices, pause and learn and remember – especially at Thanksgiving time – what a rich legacy we have been given, and express our gratitude to Almighty God.



College Students Addresses – a quick note to say “hi” is always welcome!



Leah Brower - 3851 Starchief, Kalamazoo, MI 49048 - going to WMU

Sean Brower - Delta Hall 03 - 3455 Burton S.E.. Grand Rapids, MI 49546-5965 - Calvin College

Anne Joling - 214 South Henry St., Apt. 2, Madison, WI 53703 email:annejoling@gmail.com - University of Wisconsin Law School

Andy Selles - 3222 W. Michgame Woods Dr., Kalamazoo, MI 49006 - WMU

Neil Karsten - 1437 Louise St., Grand Rapids, MI 49507 - Calvin College

Emma Karsten - 319 Rooks Hall, 3201 Burton St. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546 - Calvin College

Thoughts on Veterans Day - by Judy Wenke Joling



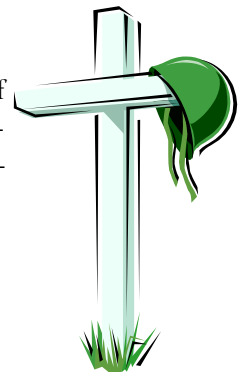
My cousin, Staff Sergeant Raymond Wenke, an Airman in the 8th Air force, 44th Bomb Group, 68th Squadron died somewhere over Germany on Saturday, April 8, 1944 – the day before Easter Sunday. I never knew Raymond, his life and death took place before I was born. I never knew him; I only knew *of* him.

Raymond was a tail gunner. On that Saturday, during a combat mission, his plane was hit by enemy fighters three times. The first time, a single engine was lost causing them to drop out of formation. One shell came through the little window in the nose compartment and went into the electrical box knocking out power to the nose turret. The pilot thought he could get back into formation and continue toward their target. They were almost back into formation when they were hit yet again, losing two more engines and causing several explosions in the fuselage. Orders were given to bail. Reports indicate that a crew member witnessed Raymond getting out of his rear turret and in the process of putting on his chute. Five crew members survived; Raymond was not among them. Raymond's bomber was one of 11 B-24's lost by the 44th Bomb Group that day.

Just three days before, Raymond had turned 21 years old. His parents, my Uncle Jake and Aunt Marian, lost their only child that day. Uncle Jake and Aunt Marion had great difficulty recovering from their loss. There was much concern by other family members that their broken hearts could not be mended. But God is gracious, and comfort came. Over the years, they took part in family gatherings and, of course, there would be laughter. They celebrated the weddings of their nieces and nephews and the births of their children. My first daughter was born on April 8th – the day that Raymond had died. While they delighted in my happiness, it was yet another painful reminder of their loss.

The nieces and nephews hosted a party when Uncle Jake and Aunt Marian celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, and again when they celebrated their 60th. Undoubtedly, there were happy times. But, always, there was that sadness in their eyes that could not be denied – that slight quiver in their voices when they spoke of Raymond. On Mother's Day there were no cards. On Father's Day there were no cards. There were no pictures of grandchildren to carry proudly in their wallets or to set on end tables in the living room. When advancing age left them frail and unable to live on their own, they moved to Park Village Pines. Eventually, they marked 73 years of marriage – but there were no grandchildren or great-grandchildren to marvel at the blessing of so many years together – or to make weekly visits or phone calls. In the end, arrangements for their funerals were made by the nieces and nephews who for years had attempted to somehow fill the gaping hole that had been left in their hearts.

Lately, I've been doing a bit of research into Raymond's life and death. It seems right to think of him and to honor his sacrifice and his family's sacrifice. Freedom is not free. In fact, it is horrendously expensive. Thank you, veterans, for your service - for there is no peace without peace-keepers.



Showing Care with Coffee



Would you like to do a little something for Pastor Ben to show your appreciation in a simple way? Pastor Ben has a new Keurig Coffee Brew System for his office. We would like your help keeping him supplied with coffee. Boxes of Keurig gourmet single cup coffee are on sale frequently at Meijer, Kohl's and Bed, Bath and Beyond. Place a box in the cupboard labeled "coffee for Pastor Ben" in the Gathering Room with a note of encouragement or thanks or leave it



anonymously. Then when you are home enjoying your own cup of coffee, remember to lift up our Pastor and his family in prayer. (Rumor has it he likes flavored, caffeinated coffee.)

Does God Exist?

A man went to a barbershop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed.

As the barber began to work, they began to have a good conversation.

They talked about so many things and various subjects.

When they eventually touched on the subject of God, the barber said:

'I don't believe that God exists.'
'Why do you say that?' asked the customer.
'Well, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God doesn't exist. Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people?

Would there be abandoned children?

If God existed,
there would be neither suffering nor pain.
I can't imagine a loving
God who would allow all of these things.'

The customer thought for a moment, but didn't respond because he didn't want to start an argument.

The barber finished his job and the customer left the shop.

Just after he left the barbershop,
he saw a man in the street with long,
stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard.

He looked dirty and unkempt..
The customer turned back and entered the barber shop again and he said to the barber:

'You know what? Barbers do not exist.'

'How can you say that?' asked the surprised barber.
'I am here, and I am a barber. And I just worked on you!'

'No!' the customer exclaimed. 'Barbers don't exist because if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside.'

'Ah, but barbers DO exist! That's what happens when people do not come to me.'

'Exactly!' affirmed the customer.
'That's the point! God, too, DOES exist!'

That's what happens when people do not go to Him and don't look to Him for help.

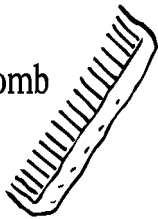
That's why there's so much pain and suffering in the world.'

BE BLESSED & BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS !!!!!

"Instrument of Praise!"

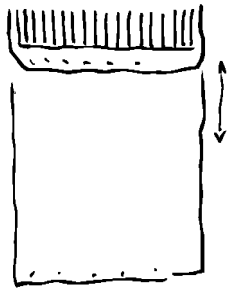
You will need:

- a fine-tooth comb
- waxed paper
- tape

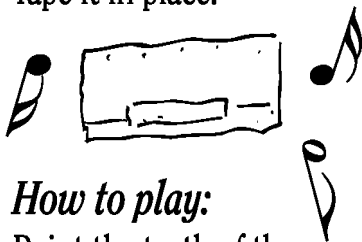


How to make:

Cut a piece of waxed paper as wide as your comb and long enough to wrap completely around it.

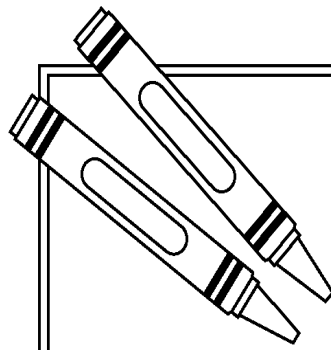


Wrap the paper around the comb. Make sure the points of the teeth are under a fold of the paper. Tape it in place.



How to play:

Point the teeth of the comb up. Hold the comb very close to your lips. Hum a song of praise! Be sure to hum with your mouth, not your nose! Your humming will cause the wax paper to vibrate, sounding like a kazoo!



Just for

KIDS

A Special Song of Thanks

Use the music code to find the words for this familiar song of thanks.

CODE:

A ≡	E ♪	I ♪	O ♪	U ■
B ♪	F ♪	L <	P ♪	V ♪
C ♪	G ♪	M ^	R ♪	W #
D ♪	H ♪	N ♪	S ♪	X ∞
			T ■	Y ♪



Challenge: What do we commonly call this song?

The

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, praise him, all creatures here below, praise him above, ye heavenly hosts, Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Doxology

Happy Birthday!

- 1 Deb Cramer
- 5 Walt Cramer
Seth Brower
- 6 Lyn Scholten
- 9 Bob McNeilage
- 11 Dean Denton
Steve French
Tom Triemstra
- 13 Jacob Hulst
- 16 Ezra Hulst
- 19 Ken Smit
- 20 Harold Bauman
Elizabeth Curtiss
Rob VanOosterum
Josh VanderLugt
- 21 Gary VanderLugt
- 26 Lorraine Cramer

Happy Anniversary!

- 11/11/49 John & Bernadene
Dykstra
- 11/12/55 Walt & Muriel
Cramer
- 11/22/46 Bob & Annetta
Sportel

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Library Notes: Thea McNeilage

The December issue will come out
on Dec. 6, all articles are due by
Dec. 1.

NOVEMBER SCHEDULES

NURSERY

AM	PM
11/1 Joel & Cindy Amos Family	Julie Smit
11/8 Jim & Lisa Bosch Family	Joanne Smit
11/15 Dwain & Becky Cramer Family	Chris Selles
11/22 Becky Smith & Amanda DeBruyn	Ruth Slager
THANKSGIVING - VOLUNTEERS PLEASE-talk to Lisa Bosch	
11/29 Jack & Joanne Karsten Family	Courtney Bosch

OFFERINGS

AM	PM
11/1 General Fund/ Christian Ed.	CRWRC (World Hunger)
11/8 General Fund/Christan Ed.	Missions
11/15 General Fund/Christain Ed.	Chaplaincy Ministries
11/22 General Fund/Benevolent Fund	Christian Education
THANKSGIVING - Missions	
11/29 General Fund/Christian Ed.	GEMS/Cadets of our church

ACCOMPANISTS

AM	PM
11/1 Barb Hassing	Joy Koning
11/8 Kay Triemstra	Barb Hassing
11/15	Ruth Wiersma
11/22 Kay Triemstra	Anne Barnes
THANKSGIVING - Kay Triemstra	
11/29 Linda French	Ruth Wiersma

LIBRARIANS

11/1 MaryLee Gosnell	11/8 MaryLee Gosnell	11/15 Karen Tiesman
11/22 Karen Tiesman	11/29 Marge Cramer	

COFFEE SERVER - Evelyn Izenbaard

GREETERS

AM - Marilyn Poortenga & Tom Triemstra
PM - Walt & Muriel Cramer

WELCOME CENTER

11/1 Dave & Judy Joling	11/8 Rod & Henrietta Linders
11/15 Will & Lyn Scholten	11/22 Jim & Lisa Bosch
11/29 Dale & Deb Cramer	

SONG SERVICE LEADERS

11/1 Dean Denton	11/8 Rod Linders	11/15 Rich Post
11/22 Will Scholten	11/29 Molly Selles	

TECH TEAM

11/1 Mark & Matt Terpstra	11/8 Scott & Seth Brower
11/15 Jim & Tina Slager	11/22 Mark & Matt Terpstra
11/29 Scott & Seth Brower	

USHERS

AM - Jerry Poortenga & Allison Bosch
PM - Eric Selles
VALET PARKING - Rob VanOosterum

COUNCIL NOTES - OCTOBER 13, 2009

Committee Reports:

Worship started having extra praise team practice once a month.

Unfinished Business:

Discussed slate of nominees/returned letters

Discussed our call as leaders and goals for elders and deacons.

Went over proposal for the use of/descriptions for church funds.

Discussed recommendations to present to congregation.

New Business:

Budget process is ongoing.

Congregational meeting set for December 8, 2009.

O beautiful for heroes proved

Newscaster Tom Brokaw went to the beaches of Normandy in June 2004 to honor the thousands of soldiers who invaded France 60 years ago. Part of his report included an interview with a survivor of the invasion, an old veteran named Harold Baumgarten. He had been with 29 other soldiers who jumped from a landing craft to rush onto the beach while bullets peppered them incessantly. Only two of the group of 30 men survived the day. Baumgarten himself was wounded in his jaw and had to wait a day before he could be treated.

Altogether on that one day some 4,900 soldiers died.

Harold Baumgarten was only 19, but such an experience made him a serious young man who, thanking God that he had survived, vowed to make his life count for something. He decided to become a physician and to dedicate himself to serve anyone who came to him, particularly veterans.

Dr. Baumgarten kept his fees low so that those with smaller incomes would feel comfortable seeking his care. In his mind, he was serving on behalf of his fellow soldiers who had died.

Katherine Lee Bates, who penned "America the Beautiful" (1904), was surely thinking about such veterans when she wrote the third stanza:

O beautiful for heroes proved

In liberating strife.

Who more than self the country loved

And mercy more than life!

America! America!

May God thy gold refine

Till all success be nobleness

A prayer for Thanksgiving Day

Almighty God, our Creator, Redeemer and Eternal Companion, we come to you overwhelmed by the goodness you bestow on us without limits.

On this special day, we recall how you blessed our forefathers who came to this wonderful land seeking freedom to worship without restraint or hindrance.

We are immeasurably grateful for our heritage. We pray that our faith may be as fervent as the faith of those who left everything for a land strange to them and where they were strangers to the natives.

Therefore, we gather as grateful benefactors of your pilgrim servants who paid a costly price to glorify you and serve you faithfully. For them we give you our deepest gratitude mindful of that first Thanksgiving meal shared by newcomers and natives. We gather around our tables as family and friends.

We come to you in love and great appreciation for your constant grace and gifts bestowed upon us. The abundant and beautiful food before us is the most lovely and present evidence.

Ever-giving and ever-loving God, we humbly thank you for all your benefits. We wish only one thing more. May we have the honor of your presence? Be our Guest that we may know that we have had fellowship with you and with one another.

In the name of your greatest gift to us, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.